

# Short Report: Arthritis and Physical Activity



*Results from the 2009 Kansas Arthritis  
Call Back Survey and BRFSS*



Kansas Arthritis Program

# Arthritis and Physical Activity

Physical activity decreases pain, improves function, and delays disability due to arthritis.

In Kansas, approximately 509,000 adults, or 24% of the population, have arthritis<sup>1</sup>. Successfully managing arthritis symptoms, such as through regular, moderate physical activity, helps prevent disability and improves quality of life<sup>2</sup>. Statewide surveillance indicates that adults with arthritis are twice as likely to be inactive as compared to those without arthritis<sup>1</sup>. In order to increase the level of physical activity among adults with arthritis, it is important to understand why these persons are inactive. However, little is known about barriers to physical activity among adults with arthritis in Kansas.

## *By the Numbers*<sup>3</sup>

- ◇ 9 in 10 adults with arthritis agree that it is important for someone with arthritis to get moderate physical activity (30 minutes per day, at least 3 days per week)
- ◇ Only 7 in 10 adults are highly confident they can get the appropriate amount of physical activity each week
- ◇ 1 in 5 adults with arthritis get recommended levels of physical activity
- ◇ 2 in 5 adults with arthritis do not get any physical activity

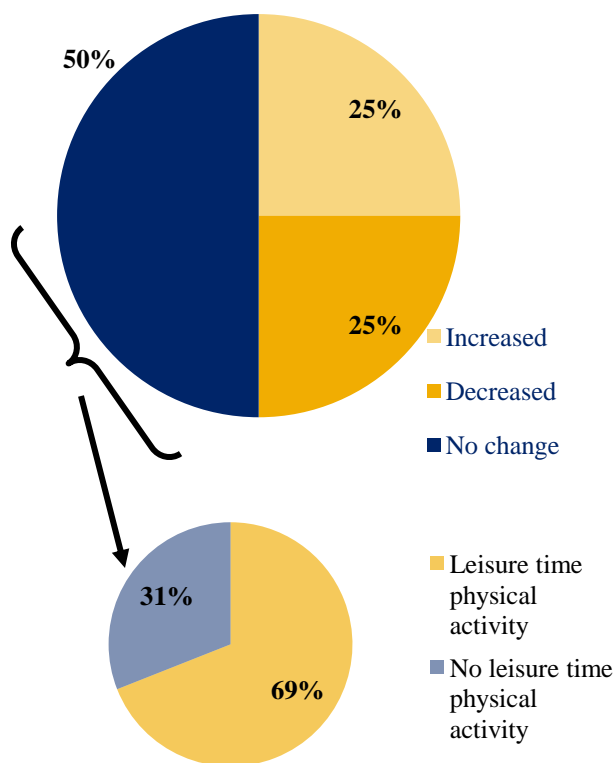
### *Among Adults 65 Years and Older*

- ◇ 2 in 5 adults with arthritis have another injury or health condition that keeps them from exercising
- ◇ 1 in 5 adults with arthritis do not exercise because they are afraid they might fall due to their arthritis or joint symptoms

### **Fear of falling due to arthritis decreases positive attitudes toward physical activity and decreases confidence in ability to exercise.**

- ◇ 86% of adults with arthritis who are afraid they might fall agree that it is important to get moderate physical activity as compared to 90% of adults who are not afraid of falling.
- ◇ 50% of adults with arthritis who are afraid they might fall are highly confident that they can get the appropriate amount of moderate physical activity as compared to 77% of adults who are not afraid of falling.
- ◇ 35% of adults with arthritis who are physically inactive are afraid they might fall due to their arthritis or joint symptoms.

### Change in Physical Activity since Arthritis Diagnosis

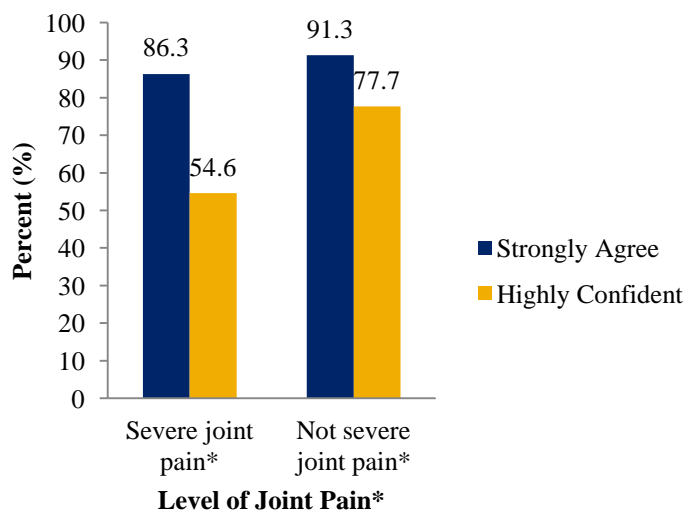


After receiving an arthritis diagnosis from their healthcare professional, about 25% of Kansas adults increased their level of physical activity; about 25% decreased their level of physical activity.

Of the remaining 50% who did not change their level of physical activity, 69% were currently participating in leisure time physical activity and 31% currently were not.

Source: 2009 Arthritis Call Back Survey, Kansas BRFSS, Bureau of Health Promotion, KDHE

### Opinions on Getting Regular, Moderate Physical Activity



Fewer adults with arthritis who have severe joint pain agree it is important for someone with arthritis to get regular, moderate physical activity, and even less are highly confident that they can get regular, moderate physical activity, as compared to those who do not have severe joint pain.

Source: 2009 Arthritis Call Back Survey, Kansas BRFSS, Bureau of Health Promotion, KDHE

**Strongly Agree:** Respondents strongly agreed that it is important for someone with arthritis or joint symptoms to get moderate physical activity for 30 minutes a day for three or more days per week.

**Highly confident:** Respondents rated a 7 or higher on a scale of 1-10 on how confident they are that they can get moderate physical activity for 30 minutes a day for three or more days per week.

\*Severe joint pain: rated a 7 or higher on a scale of 1-10, where 1 is no pain or aching and 10 is pain or aching as bad as it can be.

# *What Can Be Done*

## *Individuals can ...*

- ◇ Work towards getting 30 minutes of moderate physical activity at least 3 days a week. If necessary, this can be achieved by breaking the 30 minutes into 3, 10-minute segments.
- ◇ Talk to your doctor or nurse about how you can safely begin to incorporate physical activity into their daily routine.
- ◇ Attend a physical activity class or self-management course that can help them you learn how to manage arthritis or joint symptoms through physical activity. Information on availability in Kansas can be found at: <http://www.dhe.state.ks.us/arthritis/>

## *Employers can ...*

- ◇ Implement policies that support physical activity such as using flex time or break time for walking outside.
- ◇ Support built environment changes that encourage physical activity, such as making bike racks available near the worksite.
- ◇ Make evidence-based physical activity and self-management programs, such as Walk with Ease or the Kansans Optimizing Health Program (KOHP), available at the worksite.

## *Healthcare providers can ...*

- ◇ Routinely screen patients for arthritis or arthritis-related symptoms (joint stiffness, pain and/or swelling).
- ◇ Recommend evidence-based physical activity programs, such as the Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program or Walk with Ease, both of which have been shown to decrease joint pain due to arthritis and increase balance.
- ◇ Follow-up with patients to ensure they are working towards getting recommended levels of physical activity.

## *Communities can ...*

- ◇ Support community-based programs, such as the Kansans Optimizing Health Program (KOHP), that helps people develop skills to manage their arthritis symptoms and become more active in their daily lives.
- ◇ Support built environment policies that make it easier for community members to be more active in their neighborhoods.

## *For more information:*

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1. 2009 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), Bureau of Health Promotion, Kansas Department of Health and Environment.

2. <http://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/index.htm>

3. 2009 Kansas Arthritis Call Back Survey, Bureau of Health Promotion, Kansas Department of Health and Environment